



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

**Remarks of Alfonso Aguilar  
Chief of the Office of Citizenship  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
*Launch of Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants*  
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Thank you for your presence this morning as we formally launch today a new landmark publication of the federal government that I am sure will be extremely useful to the immigrant community in the United States, especially newcomers.

But, let me begin by saying by stating an obvious historical reality: we are a nation of immigrants. And at USCIS, we value the responsibility to uphold our time-honored American tradition of welcoming new comers and giving them an opportunity for a better life. To do that, we are fundamentally transforming the delivery of immigration benefits to make our processes simpler, our procedures more efficient and our service hassle-free.

Yet, making the immigration journey smoother and swifter is not enough. We also must make sure that newly arrived permanent residents understand their civic responsibilities and are prepared to fulfill them. In recognition of this important mission, Congress and the Administration created the Office of Citizenship at USCIS, to promote instruction and training on citizenship rights and responsibilities and to provide immigrants with the information and tools necessary to successfully integrate into civic life.

The Office of Citizenship's education and outreach efforts target immigrants at two key points on their journey toward American citizenship. First, when they become permanent residents. Later, when they become eligible to begin the formal naturalization process. It is our goal to enhance educational resources and promote opportunities to support immigrants' integration and participation in American civic culture.

So today, we are pleased to announce the release of *Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants*. This landmark publication represents the first time in recent history that the federal government has provided orientation materials for new permanent residents.

Designed for permanent residents and organizations that serve them, *Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants* contains practical information to help immigrants settle into everyday day life in the United States, as well as a wealth of information about our system of government, constitutional principles, the American people, and the responsibilities that come with the freedoms we enjoy. In addition, the guide also provides new immigrants with ideas on how to become involved in their new communities, find employment, housing, and schools for their children.

*Welcome to the United States* is available for free, and can be found online in English, Spanish, Chinese and Vietnamese at <http://uscis.gov/graphics/citizenship>. Copies will soon be available online in Tagalog, Korean, Russian, Arabic, French, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole. Print copies of the English and Spanish guides are available through the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) by calling 1-866-512-1800 or by ordering through their website at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>, with bulk purchases available at a discount. This is also a novel approach from the federal government towards immigrants. We believe that we should engage immigrants as soon as they arrive in America in their own language since many do not speak English when they arrive. We are not going

to wait until they become eligible for citizenship to encourage them to learn about our country and learn English. We want to encourage them to do this as soon as they arrive.

The Office of Citizenship is also developing additional educational materials and tools to help those interested in becoming US citizens. One of these tools is a set of civics flash cards. The cards present ninety-six questions and answers found on the Naturalization test in an attractive and easy-to-use format, which immigrants can study in preparation for the exam. Learning and identifying with the fundamental civic principles that define our American identity is a fundamental and necessary step to become a full citizen.

The flash cards and *The Guide* represent just a few of the new resources available from USCIS geared towards creating a smoother and simpler transition for immigrants into American life. I encourage you to visit our website or contact one of our local Community Liaison Officers for the latest information on these and other exciting new programs from the Office of Citizenship.